

1. The Kindergarten

In a private discussion with a Goenka practitioner I have learnt, that various meditation practices may lead the yogi to the so called '*bhaṅga ñāṇa*' (the fourth of the 16 *vipassanā* knowledges), but from there onwards it is necessary to follow Goenka's 'method', otherwise enlightenment cannot be reached. This however is not the first time when a practitioner is so confident about his/her technique, that they will (usually without any experience of other technique) categorically condemn all teachers and ways of meditation that are not exactly same as his. What is more unpleasant here, that this phenomenon of 'sectarianism' appears not only among Western Buddhist yogis, but also among followers of theistic religions. Strikingly, Burmese Buddhists, just like the Sinhalese, do not have that kind of problem.

My friend kindly shared with me a link where I'd learn that Goenka himself has declared his technique to be the 'only path'. I listened to the link and learned something quite different :-).
http://www.audiodharma.org/talks/audio_player/2651.html - "Talk on Dynamics of Insight Meditation" by ven. Anālayo, in Insight Meditation Center, California, 18th of October, 2011.

If you don't like to listen to whole the over-hour talk, move the graphical jack right to 46:20. I have typed up for you what I heard there:

"The way how Goenka will read the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* is probably quite different from the way Mahāsi reads it. The same text. It is perfectly fine. And I am coming to the second thing. And this is something and maybe somebody of you can answer that to me. This is something I totally do not understand. Why not only advanced meditators, but even meditation teachers think that what they do is the only right thing and everyone else is wrong [laughing]. I simply don't .. It seems to me like kindergarten, you know? "What I got is better than (what) is you, hehe!" [lot of laughing]. See you do understand that? Why can you not do Goenka and I do Mahāsi, and be both happy? That's just what suits me and I am so wonderful to hear how you do it and how interesting .. I realize it can be done in other way but I can still do it my way. ... "

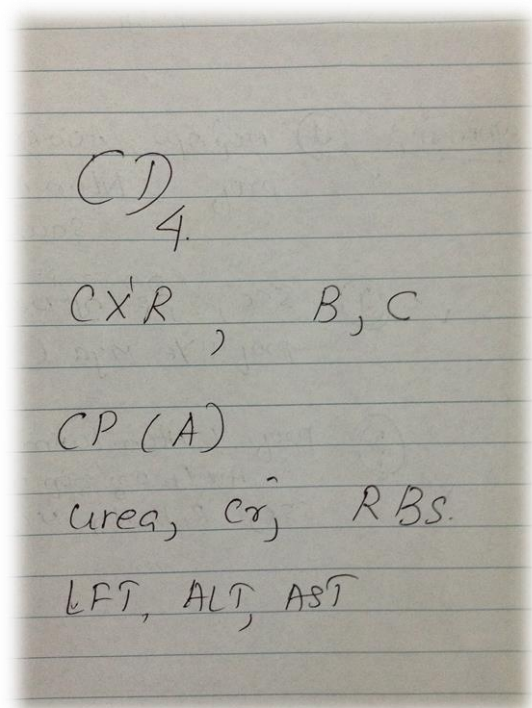
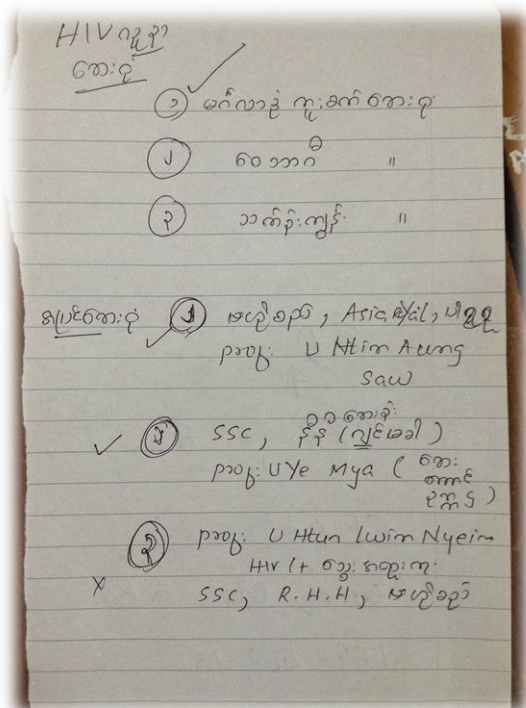
2. Tagu - The Month That Lasts a Year

Burmese calendar is a slightly modified version of the ancient Indian, and the calendar as we know it in the West has been with difficulties added to the traditional one. It doesn't seem to replace the former, however it starts to gain more and more prominence. The previous calendar and its history is in detail explained in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burmese_calendar#Structure - Wiki 'Burmese Calendar' from 160105). The year consists of twelve lunar months, and starts with the month Tagu. But not on its first day. It starts on the day of Tagu which corresponds with the "New Year" day of the yearly calendar. The part of Tagu which precedes the New Year's day is counted as the second part of the previous year's Tagu month. The portion of Tagu that follows after New Year's day is known as the "early Tagu", and the portion of Tagu that precedes the New Year's day next year, is called "late Tagu". This is what happens most commonly ... read more in the Wikipedia article:

"Tagu is almost always divided into two parts Hnaung Tagu (နှောင်းတန်ခူး; "Late Tagu"), before the New Year's Day and Oo Tagu (ဦးတန်ခူး; "Early Tagu") on and after the New Year's Day. In some years, the year was so behind the solar year that the new year falls in Kason and both Hnaung Tagu and Hnaung Kason (နှောင်းကဆုန်; "Late Kason") exist. Therefore, just saying "Tagu of 1373 ME" is not complete as "Oo Tagu of 1373" corresponds to 2011 CE while "Hnaung Tagu of 1373" corresponds to 2012 CE."

3. HIV – The Public Secret

HIV is much more common than we'd ever dare to conceive. According to the Wikipedia article (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_Myanmar), Myanmar ranks as 51st among 166 countries estimated for HIV, with 1.3% population infected. As Dr. Daw Khin Ma Ma shared with me, "HIV is everywhere". I learned that particular professions, namely taxi-drivers, bus-drivers, and businessmen are particularly abundant with infected people. {I don't know why did the doctor name these for me.} "Adult and older, rich and poor, HIV is everywhere." Just recently a helper in Shwe Oo Min monastery shared with me that her friend secretly told her that she (the helper's friend) is infected with HIV. After two tests, getting continuously thinner, there is a strong suspicion that it's true. I asked Dr. Daw Khin Ma Ma about possible help, and she kindly prescribed for me addresses where the infected person may go and get help. If you also encounter a person in need, please, share with them this information (only for Yangon area).



The first portion lists the hospital where HIV is treated for free. The second portion lists particular doctors that provide the patient with more care and comfort, but are not for free.

These are blood-tests that should be done by the patient before they visit the hospital or doctor who may treat the disease.

May all beings be happy :-)

Monk Sarana